

WORLD MALARIA DAY COMMEMORATION 2015-BURURE

Although belated, the 2015 World Malaria day commemoration was “exceptionally planned and highly attended” according to the project coordinator Mrs Y.Muzezewa. The event which was conducted on Friday the 15th of May 2015 at Burure Clinic, saw approximately 3 000 people defying the scorching heat and witnessing and participating for close to five hours. In attendance were pupils from eight nearby schools, nurses from nearby clinics, community structures, environmental health technicians from across Gokwe North, the District Education Officer, the District Administrator’s office, the office of the President, government departments in the district, local NGOs, Gokwe North and Gokwe South district health executive committees, ELCZ malaria team, community leaders including Chief Simuchembo and Headman Madzivazvido and the general Burure community.



Figure 1; Overflow crowd standing outside the fence

The theme for the 2015 World malaria day was “*Invest in the future. Defeat malaria*”. Investing in the future is the business of all stakeholders hence the invitation of a cross section of the community. The day started with presentations from practically every school present. Each school health club had a message to disseminate on malaria prevention, control and treatment. Some however spiced the messages with other health and wellness messages as school health clubs concentrate on different health issues. Of note was Kabuyuni primary school which had a drama which summarised all the aspects of malaria control. Three ELCZ malaria ambassadors also took to the stage and Mr Muyashu, the ambassador from Gumunyu left the malaria team really proud of the concept of malaria ambassadors. He showed so much passion for his work that much can be accomplished through him.

Reverend Mataka, the Burure Parish Pastor in Charge, delivered a speech on behalf of the Church. Reference was made to the gains the project has realised up to date and how it wishes community structures could continue the project even after 2015. This did not go down well with most community leaders who expressed that the Church still had a lot to do under the malaria project. On behalf of Chief Simuchembo, Mr Simuchembo pictured below begged the Church to continue especially with the component of Internal Lending and Saving Schemes (ISALs). He being a malaria ambassador as well highlighted that in his area he has realised that ISALs can raise the standard of living of the people thereby improving their health.



Figure 2: Chief Simuchembo representative imploring the Church not to end the project prematurely



Figure 3: Rev Mataka , Burure Pastor in Charge

The other people who made speeches in line with the theme of the day were representatives from the DA's office, rural district council, Gokwe North District Medical Officer, Provincial Environmental Office and finally the guest of honour who was the DMO from Gokwe South. The guest of honour chronicled the journey the district has travelled in relation to malaria control but also gave warning that people should not relax as some areas in Gokwe North recorded outbreaks this year. He mentioned that the country is now working towards elimination and Gokwe North should not derail the process. Outbreaks and deaths were recorded mostly in Zhomba and Chireya areas.

The day was concluded by what seemed to be like a 'post- test'. The community sister from Nembudziya was requested to conduct quiz to assess the level of knowledge among the general community. The prizes were t/shirts from ELCZ malaria project with the message "*Munhu muneti, mushonga kumadziro. Wafiritisa here?*" From the responses that were given, it could be concluded that the project has done a good job on malaria awareness. If this knowledge could be put into action then we are truly on the road to defeating malaria and the future is indeed bright.